

REGION IX, MAINLAND REGIONAL RESPONSE TEAM MEETING MINUTES

SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

26-27 MARCH 1998

I. General Information:

The Region IX, Mainland Regional Response Team (MRRT) Meeting was held at Marine Safety Office San Diego, San Diego, California and was chaired by the U.S. Coast Guard and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

II. Welcome and Introductions:

The meeting was called to order on Thursday, 26 March 1998 at 0900, by the MRRT co-chairs CAPT Edward Page and Ms. Kathleen Shimmin. Attendees and observers were welcomed.

III. Agenda Items:

- Environmental Protection Agency/EPA & NRT Update: Ms. Kathleen Shimmin (EPA) informed the group of agenda items that were discussed at the National Response Team/Regional Response Team Co-Chairs Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, 24-26 February 1998. Some of the items that were discussed at this meeting were improving the alignment of the NRT/RRT common objectives and the involvement of the National Response System partners; improving outreach activities and communications with state/local governments and the general public; the development of outreach products such as an NRT/RRT Home Page and a standard powerpoint presentation; the development of a "best practices" concept for evaluating spill responses; promoting an integrated contingency plan; improving future exercises by prioritizing lessons learned and ensuring that they are incorporated into exercise plans; and an overview of the Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) program. Additionally, the Fiscal Year 1998 Work Plan for the Region IX, Mainland RRT was reviewed. The next scheduled meetings are May 1998 in Rio Rico, Arizona, and September 1998 in South Lake Tahoe, California.
- Coast Guard MSO San Diego/Marine Safety Office Update: LT Mark Cunningham (MSO) informed the group of the MSO's response to a Navy LCU that had ran aground on San Clemente Island. A video was shown that depicted salvage operations conducted both by the Marine Safety Office and Pacific Strike Team personnel.
- Coast Guard MSO San Diego/Marine Safety Office Update: LT Kent Bauer (MSO) informed the group of the MSO's response to M/V KURE's (639 ft. bulk carrier) grounding in Humboldt Bay on 14MAR98. Although no oil was spilled, the UC was established consisting of representatives from the MSO, OSPR, and RP. Both MSRC and the Pacific Strike Team Salvage team were on scene and ready to respond if necessary. LT Bauer also briefed on mystery tarballs that had been appearing on beaches from Point Reyes to Santa Cruz. A UC was established on 17JAN98 in Point Reyes to direct bird recovery and rehabilitation operations. The bird recovery success rate is estimated to be at 50-60% and at last count, 1000 birds had died from the tarballs. 550 oiled birds had been captured and were rehabilitated in Berkeley and Santa Cruz with an 80% survival rate. Estimated cost of this operation is \$700K.
- State of California/California Update: Mr. Mike Sowby also briefed the group of the mystery tarball spills that had been appearing on beaches from Point Reyes to Santa Cruz and stated that the isotope analysis of the tarballs ruled out the possibility that the tarballs could have been Alaskan North Slope

(ANS) crude. Mr. Sowby also advised the group that OSPR was drafting an In Situ Burning decision making document that would soon be released for public comment. Ms. Cathi Slaminski (OES) advised the group that the Regional Emergency Operations Center's (REOC's) had responded to the El Nino storms and that to date, Emergency Support Function #10 had not been activated.

- Department of the Interior/DOI Update: Ms. Pat Port (DOI) briefed the group on personnel changes occurring within the Department of the Interior and that Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) issues were now being handled by Mr. Chip Demarest.
- Scripps Institute: Mr. Jerry Wanetick from the Center for Coastal Studies at the Scripps Institute of Oceanography, gave a demonstration of products available on their website: www.ccs.ucsd.edu/oilspill.
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration/NOAA Update: CDR Bruce Hillard (NOAA) advised the group of the San Francisco Bay Physical Oceanographic Real Time System (PORTS). PORTS is designed to provide crucial information in real time to mariners, oil spill response teams, managers of coastal resources, and others about San Francisco Bay's water levels, currents, salinity, and winds. The Marine Exchange operates PORTS as a service to those who must make operational decisions based on oceanographic and meteorological conditions in the Bay. A PORTS "handover ceremony" to the San Francisco Marine Exchange will occur on 07 May with funding for this system over the next two years to be provided by OSPR and the State Department of Boating and Waterways. In response to user needs and at the request of the San Francisco Bar Pilots new wind sensor will be installed at the Oakland Outer Harbor. A private consultant has been contracted to study PORTS maintenance, management, and reliability to determine and categorize the users.
- Minerals Management Service/MMS Update: Mr. Manuel Saenz (MMS) provided information on MMS responsibilities under OPA '90 for the 23 platforms off the coast of California. He stated that MMS collects revenues from leases for these platforms and that response activities have been arranged between MMS/USCG through an MOU and between MMS/OSPR through an MOA. Scheduled and unannounced oil spill drills that meet NPREP guidelines are arranged between MMS, OSPR, and the USCG. Mr. Saenz also advised the group that MMS is currently assisting in the development of test protocols for burn boom.
- Department of the Interior/BLM Update: Mr. John Key (BLM) provided an update on the MolyCorp Inc. Mountain Pass Mine in eastern San Bernardino County. MolyCorp announced that it was going to shut down its controversial wastewater pipeline cutting production by 50 percent and laying off about half of its 230 employees. MolyCorp plans on building a pipeline that meets environmental regulations and expects this process to take at least a year. The mine has been under pressure from government agencies to clean up wastewater from several spills from a broken pipeline in 1996 and in its evaporation ponds. The pipeline had spewed about 350,000 gallons of wastewater containing lead and radioactive elements in a pond near Primm, Nevada, just across the California/Nevada border.
- Coast Guard MSO San Diego/Computer Demonstration: LTJG John Reinert (MSO) gave a computer demonstration of how America On Line (AOL) was going to be used for the upcoming MSO San Diego National Preparedness for Exercise Program (NPREP) drill in April. Various sections of the Incident Command System (ICS) were going to utilize an AOL "chat room" to pass information and for record keeping purposes.
- Department of the Energy/Spent Nuclear Fuel Update: Mr. Mike Cornell (DOE) updated the group on the shipment of spent nuclear fuel to the Naval Weapons Station in Concord. Shipments are expected to begin in July and a draft Department of Energy Spent Nuclear Fuel Program Operational Contingency/Emergency Plan is now available. Local municipalities in California have received awareness and response training and four tabletop exercises have been planned.

- Clean Bay Incorporated/Clean Bay Update: Mr. Dave Peck provided the group with information on recent Clean Bay response activity. For 1998, Clean Bay has yet to have a spill response but in 1997 there were three of significance (Crockett, Humboldt Bay, and Martinez marsh/pipeline).
- Coast Guard MSO San Diego: CDR Jim Watson (Commanding Officer, MSO San Diego) informed the group of a PTP (prevention through people) partnership between the Coast Guard and Navy. This partnership has implemented measures that have decreased the gallon amount of Navy oil spills by over 50 percent. CDR Watson also briefed the group on the Navy's participation in the upcoming MSO San Diego National Preparedness for Exercise Program (NPREP) drill in April. This drill would be an excellent opportunity to see how Navy resources could be utilized during a non-Navy spill.
- Federal Emergency Management Agency/FEMA Update: Mr. Neil Johnson (FEMA) briefed the group on the storms that had affected Guam, American Samoa, and Saipan and FEMA's role in the REOC.